

**HCB 523: SPECIAL TOPICS IN MEDICAL HUMANITIES –
Advancing Health Equity, A Guide to Language,
Narratives and Concepts**

Summer I Session (May 20-Jul 1, 2024)

Location: Online, Synchronous Tues and Thursday

evenings 6-9pm Instructor: Maria Basile, MD

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This interactive, six-week graduate-level course will immerse participants in the language of health equity, the importance of narratives and other key concepts in advancing justice and equity in healthcare.

Objectives:

Participants in this unique learning experience will be able to:

- Describe health equity as a field of scholarship and a central issue in medicine.
- Outline how narrative, stories, and language are interconnected and provide opportunities to either perpetuate the status quo or to challenge and dismantle existing injustice.
- Recognize the limitations and harmful consequences of some commonly used words and phrases and suggest equity-centered alternatives.
- Cite two examples of dominant narratives in healthcare. Trace how the promotion of dominant narratives can perpetuate health inequities.
- Familiarize themselves with and reflect on key terms and concepts that are frequently used in health equity discussions.
- Develop skills and sensitivities in dialogue and critical thinking needed to achieve a health equity based public narrative.
- Discover others (organizations, individuals, movements) involved in this space.

Reading:

The main text for this course is the AMA and AAMC's, [Advancing Health Equity: a guide to language, narrative and concepts](#). The pdf is available at [Advancing Health Equity: A Guide to Language, Narrative and Concepts \(ama-assn.org\)](#).

This pdf and others will be circulated to students prior to class. The Reference List at the end of this document is a compendium of 145 books, papers and videos that represent much of the most important scholarly work in this field.

Additional resources from this list may be used in class, but will be forwarded to you if required.

A note about our virtual classroom and attendance (Zoom):

Because of the interactive nature of this synchronous, online class, it is expected that students will attend all classes from a laptop or desktop PC, have their video cameras on, and be able to share screens during class.

When possible, please notify Dr Basile if you are going to be late or absent for a class.

Reflective writing sessions:

Each week, usually on Thursdays in class, students will be asked to reflect in writing, on one of the key terms chosen at random

(<https://pickerwheel.com/pw?id=7xajG>) from the glossary of key terms on pages 28 – 48:

- **Able-bodied – Cissexism** (pp28-29)
- **Class – Culture of poverty** (pp30-32)
- **Deep narratives – “Free” market** (pp32-34)
- **Gay – Health inequity** (pp34-37)
- **Historical trauma – Narrative change** (pp37-39)
- **Non-white – Questioning** (pp39-42)
- **Race – Social gradient of health** (pp42-45)
- **Social justice – Whiteness** (pp45-47)

The reflection should reference any one or more of the terms listed in our glossary. A large portion of these sessions will be devoted to writing and sharing what we have written. Try to reflect personally on this concept and to what extent you have witnessed or anticipate demonstrating these concepts.

Class Schedule:

Week 1: (week of May 20, 2024)

Introduction

Week 2: (week of May 27, 2024)

The Language of Health Equity

Week 3: (week of June 3, 2024)

Why Narratives Matter – Dominant Narratives in Health Care

Week 4: (week of June 10, 2024)

Why Narratives Matter – The Purpose of a Health Equity-Based Narrative

Week 5: (week of June 17, 2024)

Creating Safe Spaces for dialogue in Health Equity

Week 6: (week of June 24, 2024)

Locating Your Work in Advancing Health Equity

Grading:

Reflection Essays - Up to 80% of class grades will be based almost entirely on class participation in the writing exercises, as well as feedback for and from classmates as we share our reflections.

Final Paper:

Students write a 5-7-page final essay **due Friday, June 28th. (20% of grade).**

In this essay, do your best to discern where you are in the work of Advancing Health Equity. Think keenly about some of the terms that are new to you this summer or concepts that have been important to you for a long time and that you've reflected on during this course. Choose one definition, topic, or concept as your thesis - about which you want to learn and do more and explain why. Then explore how you would go about this, moving forward. Who will you talk to, what will you do to act intentionally to advance equity and justice in health care? Finally, can you commit to frequent reflection on your work in this space? Why or why not? If yes, then how will you do this? If not, what are the barriers to frequent reflection on your work in Health Equity?

Some tips on Structure of Final Paper

Writing Your Final Paper

Introduction

In this class, we are invited to think about advancing health equity through language, critical reflection, dialogue and narrative transformation. In your introduction, present your thesis statement. What topic have you chosen to discuss in this paper.

So often, when writing their first draft, a student really gets clear on their thesis in the final and concluding paragraph of the paper! If you notice this happens to you, it can be very useful to try placing that final paragraph up at the front of the paper as you go through drafts, and incorporate it into the thesis section. Then write a second conclusion in a later draft.

Main Body

Be certain to use headings well. Headings are a roadmap for the reader. They are like signposts on the highway. They should not be complex or long, so choose a few effective words. Subheadings can sometimes also be quite helpful. **Headings** should be in bold, and *subheadings* should be in italics.

Develop your ideas and use transitions to link the major strands of your exposition. Remember, though your readers may be able to follow certain moves you make because they are familiar with the movies we've screened and the literature you've reviewed for this class, a reader outside of our class may not.

Make sure that an intelligent person who is not an expert in your topic could easily follow your argument. If you jump around without an indication of why, it will be extremely difficult for your reader to follow you.

When in doubt, break up long sentences and split up long paragraphs. Semi-colons are hard to use well, so avoid them unless you are sure of your grammar, and avoid page-long paragraphs that beg to be broken up into two or three.

Be careful to select quoted phrases, sentences, or segments of several lines with scholarly precision. Only quote the material that makes your point best, and always reference it. There is no need to quote excessively, and you should help the reader understand what you want them to get from a block quote, rather than leave it dangling at the end of a paragraph.

Conclusion

Conclude with a summary of your paper. Also, be sure to point to another Big Question (or two) that your paper has not answered, but that seems now to be the next one you would want to see answer in your topic area (and why).

***From Official Stony Brook University Policy:
(Statements required to appear in all syllabi on the Stony Brook campus)***

Americans with Disabilities Act:

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, room128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate.

Academic Integrity:

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report and suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (Schools of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/uag/academicjudiciary/>

Critical Incident Management:

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and School of medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures.

Student Accessibility Support Center Statement

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Student Accessibility Support Center, 128 ECC Building, (631) 632-6748, or at sasc@stonybrook.edu. They will determine with you what accommodations

are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential. Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and the Student Accessibility Support Center. For procedures and information go to the following website: <https://ehs.stonybrook.edu/programs/fire-safety/emergency-evacuation/evacuation-guide-people-physical-disabilities> and search Fire Safety and Evacuation and Disabilities.